



## **Mental Health Update**

July 21, 2006

### **Department of Justice, State Reach Agreement**

A settlement agreement between the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) and the State of Vermont filed today in the United States District Court is designed to remedy problems DOJ identified at the Vermont State Hospital in September 2004. A press release and supporting documents are posted at:

<http://healthvermont.gov/news/2006/072106DOJ.aspx>

### **Group Treatment for People with Co-occurring Mental Health and Substance Disorders**

Evidence has shown that appropriate group treatment is a key factor in the recovery process of people who struggle with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders. In order to be successful, it is also critical that the groups are set up in such a way that matches the participating clients' current level of substance use. On July 18<sup>th</sup> at Vermont Technical College, Lindy Amadio from Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center was VDH Division of Mental Health's guest speaker at an intensive and highly informative training on group treatment for people with co-occurring disorders. Lindy has been a major figure for almost two decades in the development of integrated treatment practices for people with these issues. During the course of the training, the audience, who were primarily staff in our Community Rehabilitation and Treatment Programs for people with severe and persistent mental illness, gained valuable insights into how to create, run and maintain groups appropriate to different levels of substance use using the resources they have here in Vermont.

### **Mental Health Block Grant Site Visit from the Center for Mental Health Services and Consultants**

This week a team from the federal Center for Mental Health Services paid a three-day site visit to the central offices of the Division of Mental Health at the Department of Health and a local provider (Washington County Mental Health Services) to monitor services and expenditures of mental health block grant funds in Vermont. Visits of this kind, made every five years, are expressions of Congressional oversight over federal dollars and the activities they support.

At the exit conference held Thursday afternoon, all members of the team had high praise for mental-health services and staff here. The consultant for Children's Services highlighted in particular Vermont's interagency collaboration and blended funding, the solid system of care beginning in infancy and early childhood, and overall positive outcomes for clients. Strengths in adult services include the widespread presence of evidence-based practices for adults with major mental illnesses, the comprehensiveness

and recovery orientation of the service system and staff, and excellent state-academic connections. Strengths across both systems include data-based quality-management activities, accessible and straightforward fiscal information, and research and statistical capacities for both routine and ad hoc reporting. A full report on the site visit will be forthcoming later this year and will be made available on this Web site.

## **FUTURES PROJECT**

### **Public Forums**

Burlington residents had the opportunity to come together the evening of July 13<sup>th</sup> for the first of several planned public forums. Held in Ward 1, the neighborhood in Fletcher Allen's backyard, the forum attracted a small number of Ward 1 residents. About 45 people in all came to hear an overview of the Futures project and an explanation of the clinical advantages of integration of the new inpatient psychiatric program with Fletcher Allen's medical/surgical capacity and the resources of its facilities.

Many useful comments and questions were raised, including the:

- prevalence of schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder, and other psychiatric disorders among our families, friends and neighbors
- development pressures in Burlington's Hill Section where Fletcher Allen and the University of Vermont have had major expansion projects
- concern about the State's commitment to adequate funding over the long term
- impact on housing, municipal, and human services in the Burlington community
- need to build a better facility and sooner than the 2012 projected timeline

Through this and additional public forums, the State and Fletcher Allen hope to bring questions and concerns to the forefront so they can be addressed. Project leaders shared their plans to maintain an ongoing presence at the Neighborhood Planning Assembly in Ward 1 and other Burlington neighborhoods and at meetings with the Mayor, his staff, city counselors and the community's social services network.

The forum was taped by public access Channel 17 and aired earlier this week. Chittenden County residents can still tune in at these times:

Fri, Jul 21 at 10:58 PM

Sat, Jul 22 at 3:58 AM

Sat, Jul 22 at 9:58 AM

Sat, Jul 22 at 3:58 PM

Tue, Jul 25 at 8:00 PM

Wed, Jul 26 at 1:00 AM

Wed, Jul 26 at 7:00 AM

Wed, Jul 26 at 1:00 PM

## **Site Review Work Group**

Community members from Burlington and greater Chittenden County are invited to join a new work group to review all of the potential sites on the Fletcher Allen campus where a primary inpatient psychiatric program could be located. The Health Department and Fletcher Allen are forming this work group to involve local residents in a process to:

- ✓ Understand the clinical advantages for integration of psychiatric inpatient care with all other medical disciplines
- ✓ Identify potential sites on Fletcher Allen's Medical Center Campus for development of the new inpatient psychiatric program
- ✓ Evaluate the feasibility for physical connection and clinical integration of each of these sites with Fletcher Allen's Medical Center Campus facilities
- ✓ Consider the development parameters of Fletcher Allen's Medical Center campus

Four meetings are planned to complete this review. All meetings are open to the public. The schedule is 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Tuesdays:

August 8	Mater Christi School cafeteria
August 22	Mater Christi School cafeteria
September 12	(location to be determined)
September 26	(location to be determined)

Volunteers may sign up by contacting Judy Rosenstreich, VSH Futures Project, 802-652-2000 or [jrosen@vdh.state.vt.us](mailto:jrosen@vdh.state.vt.us).

## **VERMONT STATE HOSPITAL CENSUS**

The Vermont State Hospital Census was 48 as of midnight Wednesday night. The average census for the past 45 days was 49.2.